

ABSTRACT

2 A communications tool that combines a software
application and various communication systems that parallel
4 natural styles of knowledge sharing and problem solving. It
merges with normal patterns of relationship to create a
6 seamless and transparent extension of community. By using
computer, Internet, telephone, e-mail, and other
8 communications technologies, the present invention brings
these communities of practice to a new level of immediacy and
10 relevance—one not encumbered by time or place. The invention
is issue-centered versus document-centered, incorporates a
12 leader-controlled structure, which is distributive and
transparent, and enables stratification of items to allow
14 multiple and simultaneous uses of the invention (e.g. dynamic
FAQ, electronic whiteboard, expert center, committee review
16 tool, etc.). Leaders control through inherited parameters.
The present invention more effectively captures and leverages
18 "tacit" knowledge (that which exists in the minds of
participants and has not been written down), by connecting
20 communities and adapting to their forms of interrelationships.